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SUBJECT: UN/COTE D'IVOIRE SANCTIONS: GROUP OF EXPERTS BRIEF
UN SANCTIONS COMMITTEE

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The Cote d'Ivoire Group of Experts (GOE), a UN-mandated group charged with monitoring implementation of UN sanctions in Cote d'Ivoire, on 8 October delivered to members of the UN Security Council Cote d'Ivoire Sanctions Committee a report documenting continued deficiencies and violations in the sanctions regime involving customs, civil aviation, arms, finance, diamonds, and individual sanctions components. The GOE offered recommendations to address these problems and to improve the regime, and Committee members agreed to draft a series of communications--including to the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), to the Chair of the Kimberly Process, and to UN member states--drawing their attention to the GOE's recommendations. END SUMMARY.

EXPERTS REPORT POOR IMPLEMENTATION

¶2. (SBU) UN Security Council Cote d'Ivoire Sanctions Committee members on 8 October received a briefing from the Cote d'Ivoire Group of Experts (GOE) on its final report covering activities since the GOE's midterm report of 14 April 2008. In its presentation, the GOE emphasized that it often has not received full cooperation from UN member states in getting all the information it needs to conduct its investigations and that the United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI), which the GOE notes is central to implementing the sanctions regime, has failed to ensure full implementation of sanctions. The GOE said in particular: the UNOCI Embargo Cell is not conducting customs inspections; arms inspections are incomplete, illicit weapons have made their way into the country, and disarmament of former combatants lags; diamonds are leaving Cote d'Ivoire in violation of the diamond embargo; military expenditures continue while Ivorian authorities and banking institutions are failing to cooperate fully; and a number of assets freeze violations have occurred while the Government of Cote d'Ivoire and neighboring states exhibit a serious lack of awareness and understanding of the sanctions regime.

POE RECOMMENDATIONS

¶3. (SBU) The GOE offered recommendations to address the issues revealed in the report. On customs, the GOE recommended that UNOCI prioritize efforts to establish a Joint Inspection Unit with Ivorian Customs and that a significant customs capacity be introduced into the Embargo

Cell to undertake inspections and sensitization. On arms, the GOE recommended that UNOCI enact an efficient information-sharing mechanism, adopt comprehensive standard operating procedures in discharging its mandate, and follow-up on cases of arms movement highlighted in the report. The GOE further encouraged the Sanctions Committee to review whether there are grounds to consider dual-use exemptions to the arms embargo beyond those enumerated in resolution 1572. On civil aviation, the GOE recommended that UNOCI continue to monitor the use of Ivoirian Air Force equipment and maintain surveillance at airport facilities. On diamonds, the GOE recommended that the Kimberly Process assist Cote d'Ivoire in establishing an internal mechanism to govern the diamond trade and that Mali, Belgium, and Israel initiate investigations into possible violations of the diamond sanctions. On finance and individual sanctions, the GOE recommended that all UN member states facilitate the GOE's access to information and take all necessary steps to implement the individual sanctions and investigate violations.

SANCTIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS COMMENT

¶4. (SBU) Sanctions Committee members largely expressed their support for the GOE's efforts in all areas. France underscored the fragility of the situation in Cote d'Ivoire and the importance of UNOCI's full and consistent involvement in the sanctions regime. The French representative also noted his delegation would look into addressing the issue of dual-use exemptions as France drafts a resolution renewing sanctions on Cote d'Ivoire, set to be considered later this month (NOTE: The Cote d'Ivoire sanctions are scheduled to

expire on 31 October. END NOTE.). The Indonesian representative on two separate occasions emphasized that sanctions are preventative--not punitive--measures, welcomed what Indonesia saw as signs of progress, and noted the Government of Cote d'Ivoire's "good intentions."

¶5. (SBU) The South African, Belgian, and Burkinabe representatives addressed GOE references to their countries. South Africa noted that Pretoria is working to address GOE claims that South Africa's Imperial Armour in January 2007 appears to have sent protective gear to Cote d'Ivoire, noting an investigation into the matter and offering additional information in an effort to reaffirm its willingness to cooperate fully. Belgium affirmed that it took note of the GOE's recommendation to initiate an investigation into the activities of Belgian companies and individuals mentioned in the report and would follow-up on the matter. The Burkinabe representative noted that Burkina Faso has cooperated with the GOE and expressed surprise at the GOE's listing of his country as non-responsive, to which the GOE responded that they were still awaiting Burkina Faso's responses to a few remaining correspondences.

DPKO WEIGHS IN

¶6. (SBU) A DPKO representative presented to the Committee UNOCI Media and Arms Embargo Monitoring reports from the month of August, noting that UNOCI has been unable to complete inspections and that a few, including inspections of the presidential perimeter, have been rejected by the Government of Cote d'Ivoire. In response to the GOE recommendations, he said UNOCI has contacted Ivorian customs twice with no response regarding efforts to establish a Joint Inspection Unit and suggested that the UN Security Council remind Cote d'Ivoire of its responsibilities. The representative also touched on cases of sexual exploitation and abuse in the country, noting many cases of violence but very few prosecutions. He said UNOCI is attempting to raise awareness on the issue and is working with nongovernmental organizations to set up victims assistance.

NEXT STEPS

¶7. (SBU) Following the presentations, the Committee members agreed the Chairman would draft letters to DPKO, the Chair of the Kimberly Process, and the permanent representatives of Mali, Belgium, and Israel drawing their attention to the recommendations in the GOE report. The Committee also agreed to emphasize the need to implement sanctions fully via a Note Verbale to all UN member states. The Chairman of the Sanctions Committee plans to circulate a statement regarding the situation in Cote d'Ivoire to the President of the UN Security Council for 27 October, several days before sanctions and the GOE's mandate are set to expire.

¶8. (SBU) The full GOE report has been mailed to IO/PSC. Please email Lorraine Konzett (konzettl@state.gov) at the USUN Sanctions Unit to request additional copies.
Khalilzad